



Dear Member

In support of global health awareness campaigns taking place this month, this edition focuses on two of the body's major organs, the lungs and kidneys. March is TB Awareness Month and 10 March was World Kidney Day.

We welcome any suggestions that you may have on articles or member benefits you would like published in future newsletters.

7 Secrets to Kidney Health

There are a number of things you can do to keep your kidneys functioning properly and remaining as healthy as possible. Hydrate, but don't overdo it. Contrary to popular belief, no studies have proven over-hydration as an effective practice in enhancing kidney function. So, while it's always a good idea to drink enough water, drinking more than the typical four to six glasses a day probably won't help your kidneys do their job any better.

- 1. Eat healthy foods.** Your kidneys can tolerate a wide range of dietary habits; and most kidney problems arise out of other medical conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes. In order to control weight and blood pressure, it is suggested that you follow healthy, moderate eating habits. Preventing diabetes and high blood pressure will help keep your kidneys in good condition.
- 2. Exercise regularly.** If you're healthy, getting exercise is a good idea because, like healthy eating habits, regular physical activity can prevent weight gain and high blood pressure. But do be mindful of how much exercise you do, especially if you're not conditioned. Overexerting yourself when you're not fit and healthy can put a strain on your kidneys, especially if you exercise so much that you cause excessive breakdown of muscle tissue.
- 3. Use caution with supplements and herbal remedies.** Excessive amounts of certain vitamin supplements and some herbal extracts may be harmful to your kidneys. Talk to your doctor about any vitamins and herbal supplements you plan to take.

Please send your suggestions to the Scheme Manager, Aashna Albert, by fax on **0861 64 77 75** or by e-mail at **aalbert@mhg.co.za**.

Until next month, enjoy this issue.



- 4. Quit smoking.** Smoking can damage blood vessels, which decreases the flow of blood in the kidneys. When the kidneys don't have adequate blood flow, they can't function at optimal levels. Smoking also increases the risk of high blood pressure as well as the risk of kidney cancer.
- 5. Don't overdo it when taking over-the-counter medication.** Common non-prescription pills like ibuprofen and naproxen can cause kidney damage if taken too regularly over a prolonged period. If you have healthy kidneys and use this medication for occasional pain, they probably don't pose a risk. But if you take them for chronic pain or arthritis, you should talk to your healthcare provider about monitoring your kidney function or finding alternative ways to control your pain.
- 6. If you're at risk, get a regular kidney function screening.** If you have either diabetes or high blood pressure, your healthcare provider should screen you for kidney dysfunction as part of routine care for those conditions.

www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/gbs



What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a chronic infectious disease that usually affects the lungs. TB is mainly spread when someone with TB coughs or sneezes, and someone else inhales the air-borne bacteria. A person can be infected with the TB organism for years without getting sick or spreading the disease to other individuals, but when their immune system weakens for some reason, TB infection can develop into an active disease. TB can be cured, but requires rigorous unbroken treatment that lasts for six months – failure to complete the treatment regimen can result in the emergence of drug-resistant strains of TB. As TB is a common opportunistic infection, South Africa has a particularly high rate of TB due to its high prevalence of HIV.

How can tuberculosis be prevented?

One of the most important aspects in TB prevention is for people with infectious TB to take their medication as prescribed. Avoid close contact with people who are infectious.

If you are taking medication, you need regular check-ups and possibly additional chest X-rays or sputum tests to show whether the medication is working, and whether you are still infectious. If the tests show the bacteria in your sputum even after a few months of treatment, you may need to take extra medication, or change the medication you are taking.

Detection of early cases and prompt treatment are crucial in controlling the spread of TB. Your local health department may need to test people who have been in contact with you for TB infection.

If you are sick enough to go to hospital, you may be placed in a special room with air vents that keep TB bacteria from spreading. People working in these rooms wear facemasks to protect themselves from bacteria. You will need to stay in the room to prevent spreading bacteria.

If you are infectious while at home, protect yourself and others as follows:

- >> Wash your hands after sneezing, coughing or holding your hands near your mouth or nose.
- >> Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze or laugh.
- >> Discard used tissues in a plastic bag, then seal and throw it away.
- >> Do not attend work or school.
- >> Avoid close contact with others.
- >> Sleep in a room away from other family members.
- >> Ventilate your room regularly. TB spreads in small closed spaces. Put a fan in your window to blow out air that may contain bacteria.

Source: www.health24.com



PMB Alert

Can a medical scheme impose a condition-specific waiting period on pregnancy if it's related to a Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB)?

Answer

Yes – A waiting period can be imposed on a new member if she had no previous medical scheme cover, or if she has been without medical scheme cover for a period longer than 90 days. A condition-specific waiting period can also be imposed if a member omits to disclose that she is pregnant when completing the medical scheme membership application form.



KPMG Fraud Hotline

Healthcare fraud is a worldwide problem and is on the increase in South Africa and we encourage the use of the fraud hotline below.

If you have a fraud-related enquiry, suspect fraud, or would like to report a case of fraud, please dial the KPMG Fraud Hotline on **0800 21 31 38** or send an e-mail to ethicsconfidential@metropolitanhealth.co.za.



More ways to be well!

PG Group Medical Scheme members have access to **Multiply Starter** and have the option to upgrade to **Multiply Provider** and **Multiply Premier**!



Visit www.momentum.co.za/multiply for more partner benefits.

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